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Afghan Taliban now 'mother of all terror groups'

• In wide-ranging, marathon presser, ISPR chief terms Afghanistan 'centre point' where terrorists of all shades are being nurtured • Says India has emerged as 'biggest patron' of Pakistan-focused terrorism • Acknowledges strikes on TTP targets along Afghan border in October last year • Defends border closure as advantageous to Pakistan • Blames 'political-terror nexus' for KP situation • Asserts law enforcers use drones only for surveillance • Says Faiz was 'used for politics', not the institution

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Afghanistan has become a hub of terrorists and non-state actors, as terrorists of different creeds operate from there, the military said on Tuesday, declaring the ruling Taliban "the mother organisation" which had been harbouring such groups since 2021.

In a wide-ranging and marathon press conference, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) chief Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry bluntly accused the Kabul regime of organising the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in its own image, as well as imparting training and issuing directions to the terror outfit.

Although he said at the outset that the presser would remain focused on counterterrorism, the military's spokesperson spoke at length about souring relations with Afghanistan, the belligerence being witnessed from India, as well as levelling criticism against the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Imran Khan, without explicitly naming the latter.

Listing 10 major incidents of terrorism in Pakistan in 2025, he said: "Who are involved in all of these high-impact [terror incidents]? They are all Afghans."

The DG ISPR also said that Afghanistan had become a "centre point where terrorists of all kinds are being nurtured".

He said that around 2,500 terrorists, who were neither Afghans nor Pakistanis, had recently reached Afghanistan from Syria.

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Did India lobby with Trump over Pakistan conflict?: Page 12

He later elaborated, saying that terrorists, "whether it is Daesh, Al Qaeda, TTP, FAK, FAH, or ETIM, have no ideology, no nationality, humanity or ethnicity… They all have one father — the Afghan Taliban."

Referring to the billions poured into Afghanistan by the US and other foreign donors, Lt Gen Chaudhry said that when that money stopped rolling in, the Afghan Taliban "spread the war in the form of terrorism across the entire region" to fund their war economy, finding "new patrons and financial sponsors, with the biggest patron for terrorism in Pakistan being India".

"So the base of operations is being provided in Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban and India's money and patronage [is available]."

Referring to a chart, he said it could be deduced from the data that after Pakistan defeated India during their four-day conflict in May 2025, terrorism surged. After its defeat, "Indians immediately sought to influence non-state actors," he said.

Moreover, he accused the political party in power in Pakistan in 2021 — ostensibly referring to the PTI — of "internally facilitating terrorists" and

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CARACAS: People wave a massive Venezuelan flag during a rally in support of ousted Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores.—AFP Report on Page 12

Balochistan merges Levies into police, abolishes 'B areas'

• Budget, assets, records, arms and infrastructure transferred to police • CM Bugti says decision resolves long-standing administrative ambiguity • ISPR chief terms move part of efforts to 'combat terror-crime nexus at grassroots'

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: The provincial government has formally merged the over century-old Levies Force into the Balochistan Police, and abolished all 'B' areas across the province, converting them into 'A' areas for the purpose of territorial jurisdiction of the provincial police.

The two areas defined the territorial jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies within the province. The Balochistan Police acted as the law enforcement agency in 'A' areas, while the Levies Force operated in 'B' areas, functioning under the command of division and district officials.

The process of merging the Balochistan Levies and ex-federal Levies into the police force had been under way for a long time and has now been completed, with the provincial government moving to enforce a uniform system of laws and regulations under a single command across the province.

The provincial government declared Sibi and Loralai divisions as 'A-Areas' for the territorial jurisdiction of the Balochistan Police, according to a notification issued by

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Arrest warrants out against PTI leaders in May 9 case

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for more than 40 PTI leaders over their absence in the case concerning the May 9 protest outside the GHQ.

The case was heard by Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Amjad Ali Shah. During the proceedings, defence lawyers sought the court's permission to meet Mr Khan at Adiala Jail, stating that access was necessary to obtain instructions regarding the pending cases.

Defence counsel told the court that they had already taken instructions from the PTI founder in connection with the cases, reiterating that effective legal representation required direct consultation with their client.

Opposing the request, the special prosecutor submitted that Mr Khan was on bail in the May 9 GHQ attack case and was not in the custody of the ATC. He further informed the court that the PTI founder had since been convicted in another case, adding that the defence could approach the relevant forum if it had any grievance regarding access.

The prosecutor maintained that, as a convicted prisoner, the PTI founder was in the custody of the jail superintendent and that, under the law, jail authorities had the power to regulate meetings. He argued that the issue raised by the defence did not fall within the jurisdiction of the ATC hearing the GHQ attack case.

In response, the defence counsel adopted a firm position, stating that until they

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Bangladesh eyes JF-17 purchase

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh has expressed an interest in the "potential procurement" of JF-17 Thunder aircraft — jointly developed by China and Pakistan — the military's media wing said on Tuesday.

The development came as Bangladesh Air Force Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan called on Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu in Islamabad, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

"The meeting focused on strengthening operational cooperation and institutional synergy, with emphasis on training, capacity building, and collaboration in aerospace advancements," it said.

The Bangladeshi air chief was leading a high-level defence delegation, ISPR said.

During their meeting, Air Chief Marshal Sidhu briefed his Bangladeshi counterpart on PAF's recent advancements and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Bangladesh Air Force through a comprehensive training framework from

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ON OTHER PAGES

T20 series in Sri Lanka begins today

Pakistan will have one final go at testing their squad's depth, ahead of next month's T20 World Cup, on Wednesday when they take on Sri Lanka in a three-match series in Dambulla in the absence of stalwarts Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi and Haris Rauf. The experienced trio, despite establishing themselves as integral cogs in Pakistan's plans for the showpiece, weren't picked owing to their stints in Australia. **Page 18**

Govt mulls fuel levy hike to aid gas sector

• Minister confirms gas circular debt over Rs3 trillion, says no increase in tariff for six months • Ali Pervaiz Malik deflects questions by NA panel about proposed use of petroleum levy for gas sector

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The government plans on increasing tax rates on petroleum products to contain more than Rs3 trillion circular debt in the gas sector instead of changing the gas tariff as determined by the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra).

While testifying before the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Petroleum, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik on Tuesday said the government was not increasing the gas tariff from January 1 on the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The meeting was presided over by Syed Mustafa Mahmood, MNA.

The minister confirmed that the gas circular debt was over Rs3 trillion, including late payment surcharge. Mr Malik, however, deflected repeated questions from lawmakers about proposals for increasing the petroleum levy by Rs5 per litre on petrol and diesel to cover the circular debt, saying a separate briefing could be arranged on the subject.

Interestingly, there are only 10 million gas consumers in the country compared to petrol and diesel which are consumed by almost the entire population. Of late, the government has been increasing the petroleum levy, currently up to Rs82 per litre, on the pretext of providing a subsidy to power consumers and building roads in Balochistan, in addition to using the levy as one of the leading general revenue sources for the Centre.

In the last week of November 2025, Ogra had determined up to 7pc (Rs118 per unit) increase in the prescribed price of natural gas to meet about Rs886bn revenue requirement of the two gas companies during fiscal year 2025-26. Under the law, the government has to make a decision on consumer-end gas prices based on Ogra's determination within 40 days.

The minister, however, said the price would not be increased for the next six months and pointed out reforms to curb gas theft and losses, besides a diversion of surplus LNG cargoes to the international market. He said Pakistan had concluded successful negotiations with Qatar to divert surplus LNG cargoes to global markets. He said a mutually acceptable arrangement had been reached to manage excess supplies.

MNA Asad Alam Niazi said that the gas sector's circular debt had surpassed a similar monster in the power sector. He asked whether a proposed Rs5 per litre levy on petrol and diesel was being considered to help retire the gas sector debt. Minister Malik

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